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High on the Hog

Ohio's Senator Young complains that in the service of the Government abroad there are too many Americans, drawing excellent salaries and fringe benefits and enjoying an active social life. This, he laments, is "living high on the hog."

And so it is. As the most favored of all people Americans generally live well up on the porker, and few of us, Senator Young included, would want it any other way. The mode of life practiced by the average Government servant abroad reflects, perhaps a little optimistically, the American standard of living, and no one is entitled to impose austerity upon him. The difference between the American and the foreign standard often is striking, but there is no need to apologize for it.

The Foreign Service officer has his car, transported at Government expense; he has his salary, generally well below that paid American salesmen or business men assigned to the same country; he can shop for American groceries at the commissary at prices only slightly below state-side rates; he has a housing allowance, and as a matter of "representation" he may go to a party every night. But he also may be spending his days in the containment of a Moscow, a Budapest or a Sofia, without much "living it up" to be done.

A case might be made for Senator Young's argument against overstaffing if the study included only Bonn or Paris and skipped over Warsaw and Bucharest. There is a tendency in the larger embassies to clutter up the premises with bodies, but even this practice has had its uses. When a run of new African states were venturing hesitantly into independence two years ago it was from the experienced ranks in London and Bonn that ready-made embassy staffs were formed.

The Foreign Service and related agencies have been favorite whipping boys for junketing congressmen—who live pretty high on the hog themselves when they are abroad. It is a wonder